

# **Economic Development, Lake, Downtown and Advanced Transportation Infrastructure Committee**

## **Meeting of April 16, 2013**

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### **Executive Summary: Stakeholder Facilitation to Improve Development and Permitting Services and Processes**

#### **Issue**

How can the city of Tempe productively engage stakeholders who are affected by the city's permitting and development policies and practices using an approach in which their input creates value for current and future policy and practices.

#### **Background:**

City Council has heard mixed reviews about our permit process from commercial and residential stakeholders who have done business with the city. Criticisms include: poor communication with clients, lack of communication between city departments and divisions, outdated processes and lack of understanding the effects of decisions on businesses.

The Community Development Department has been working on making improvements to all of areas of their development and permitting processes. The next step will be to invite those who've done business with the city, and who've had both positive and negative experiences, to offer their input in the 3<sup>rd</sup> party facilitated discussion. The results are intended to improve communication with clients between city departments and divisions, explore new processes and have a better understanding of our customers' needs while continuing to provide services that result in a safe and prosperous community.

There are several ways to engage stakeholders. The suggested method for this facilitation is the World Café model. World Café focuses on creating collaborative dialogue, sharing knowledge and discovering new opportunities for action. The method is based on systems thinking, creates dynamic conversations, and can catalyze an organization's collective intelligence around the questions and issues.

Due to the number of stakeholders who do business with the city, we would schedule several individual meetings to accommodate up to 16-20 participants per meeting. Stakeholder groups would be made up of diverse constituencies ranging from developers to property owners.

#### **Potential Solutions**

Improve development and permitting processes and the customer experience for new development projects which will result in stronger stakeholder relationships, enhance the city's image as business friendly and lead to more development.

#### **Potential Problems**

Discussions could become unproductive without proper planning and facilitation.

Stakeholders may become cynical without follow-up.

Input may not meet city's lawful obligations and stakeholders will feel slighted unless there is clear communication on the business case for decisions.

#### **Short-term Guidance Needed**

Committee approval to move forward with this plan.